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SERVICE DRESS BLUE (SDB) UNIFORMS

We are experiencing a temporary shortage of some sizes of men's and women's SDB jackets. While the Uniform Distribution Center (UDC) has thousands of jackets in stock, they have exhausted their supply of a small number of the more than 130 different sizes. As a result, depending on your size, the UDC may not be able to meet your immediate need.

Our ongoing contracting effort for both men's and women's SDB jackets is approximately 3-4 months behind schedule. This delay is the result of two major factors. In the case of those men's jackets that are managed on our behalf by DoD, the delay is largely due to the trickledown effect of ongoing military operations in places like Iraq, Afghanistan, and Haiti, that have required DoD to intensify their efforts to outfit warriors, including some of our own people who are wearing desert camouflage today. DoD is expected to award a contract for men's SDB jackets this week with deliveries in the August/September timeframe. Additionally, our own contracting staff is expected to award a second multi-year contract for additional men's jackets in September, with deliveries by December.

The women's SDB jacket is currently managed by the UDC. For the past several years, this item has been procured through a series of locally managed contracts that have, over time, grown to exceed the in-house resources and contracting authority of the UDC. During an internal review of the UDC's inventory management practices and procedures last October, we determined that the women's SDB jacket should be managed with a better long-term contracting approach. In the months that have followed, steps have been underway to put in place a multi-year contract in support of this item. While this large contract isn't expected to be awarded before September 2004, a smaller contract was awarded earlier this month and first-article testing is scheduled to begin on 7 June. Assuming that no production irregularities are noted during the evaluation period, we hope to have these uniforms on the shelf by the end of August.

Recognizing that three months is a long time to wait, the UDC is in the process of awarding a contract for the immediate procurement of the most critical sizes of men's and women's SDB jackets. This contract will bring to deliver jackets in the targetted sizes within the next few weeks.

I regret that the transition from one contract to the next has not been seamless as planned. In the interim, I have asked the UDC to continue to limit distribution of SDB jackets, both men's and women's, to accessions only so that we can properly clothe our newest members. Of course, we'll do everything possible for those members who must replace SDB jackets that are no longer usable. I ask for your patience as we work to provide greater long-term availability and choices in the cut of our Service Dress Uniform for both men and women.

Regards,

RADM Kenneth T. Venuto
Ken Venuto

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